CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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STATEMENT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL ON OCCASION OF ENTRY INTO FORCE OF TREATY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, ON 5 MARCH 1970

It is with deep satisfaction that I welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Thus, many years of persistent efforts and intensive negotiations in the United Nations and in the Conference of the 18-Nation Committee on Disarmament are finally coming to fruition.

It is hardly necessary for me to stress the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been widely acclaimed as the most important international agreement in the field of disarmament since the nuclear age began. In preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and in establishing a safeguards system for verifying the faithful implementation of its obligations, the Treaty cannot fail to play a very significant role in containing the nuclear arms race.

At the same time, the Treaty promotes the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and creates most favourable conditions for the development of a wide international co-operation in this field. In this regard, the Treaty not only reaffirms the inalienable right of all Parties to develop research and the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it also provides that all the Parties will facilitate and have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for this purpose.

It should also be stressed that the Treaty is not an end in itself but a step towards disarmament and that the Treaty imposes on all Parties a solemn obligation to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race, to nuclear disarmament and to general and complete disarmament. This is a most pressing task for the future and the Parties to the Treaty, and especially the nuclear-weapon Powers, have a great responsibility in fulfilling the obligation they have accepted under the terms of the Treaty.

I note with great satisfaction that as of today almost one hundred States have already signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Now that the Treaty has entered into force, those States which have not yet signed or ratified it will undoubtedly be encouraged to take positive action to contribute to the universality of the Treaty, so that it may fully achieve its objectives. It is my firm belief that it is in the best interests of the world community that the Non-Proliferation Treaty should command universal support.

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